

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 TRSE-00 IO-13 ACDA-10 SSM-05 SSO-00

NSCE-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 MCT-01 DHA-02

NEAE-00 INRE-00 AF-10 /093 W

-----181444Z 062567 /40

O R 181422Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3147

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

DIA WASHDC

SECDEF WASHDC

USIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 3152

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGSC PFOR, SY, IS

SUBJECT: SYRIAN MEDIA REACTION TO LIKUD VICTORY

1. MORNING RADIO DAMASCUS NEWS BROADCAST GAVE PRELIMINARY FIGURES FOR VARIOUS ISRAELI PARTIES AND REPORTED THAT LIKUD BLOC AND PARTIES SYMPATHETIC TO IT HAD TOTAL OF 57 SEATS. PERES SAID TO HAVE ATTRIBUTED THE DEFEAT OF THE ALIGNMENT TO THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION, THE CHANGE OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT'S POSITION, INFLATION, THE ECONOMIC SITUATION AND SCANDALS WITHIN THE PARTY.

2. DAMASCUS RADIO REPORTED THAT "OBSERVERS" INDICATED UNCLASSIFIED

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RESULTS WOULD LEAD TO "WELL-KNOWN" ZIONIST TERRORIST MENAHEM BEGIN" BECOMING PRIME MINISTER AFTER 29 YEARS LABOR PARTY RULE.

3. IT CONTINUED: "OBSERVERS SAY THAT ALTHOUGH THERE NOT MUCH DIFFERENCE AMONG THE OBSTINATE ZIONIST PARTIES WITH REGARD TO QUESTION OF WITHDRAWAL FROM

OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND RECOGNITION OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE'S RIGHTS, LIKUD CHARACTERIZED BY ITS REFUSAL TO WITHDRAW FROM ANY PART (OF OCCUPIED TERRITORY) AND ITS REFUSAL TO RECOGNIZE ANY PALESTINIAN PEOPLE'S RIGHTS. IT CALLS OPENLY FOR THE CONTINUED EXPANSION OF ISRAEL. LIKUD CLAIMS THAT WEST BANK AND GAZA ARE PART OF THEIR HISTORIC HOMELAND ISRAEL... OBSERVERS RECALL THAT ESTABLISHMENT OF LIKUD EMANATED FROM ZIONIST TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS IRGUN GANG WHICH COMMITTED TENS OF MASSACRES AGAINST PEOPLE OF ARAB VILLAGES. THEY REFER TO THE CRIMINAL AND TERRORIST TENDENCY WHICH CHARACTERIZES BEGIN, THE LEADER OF THE PARTY, MORE THAN ANY OTHER ISRAELI POLITICIAN."

4. AFTERNOON NEWS TOOK SIMILAR LINE AND FOCUSED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON BEGIN. IT CLAIMED THAT POLITICAL OBSERVERS EXPECTED ISRAELI POLICY DURING BEGIN'S TERM TO BE DIFFERENT FROM PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT'S, ESPECIALLY REGARDING ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT. IT NOTED THAT BEGIN HAD CONSISTENTLY REJECTED WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND ESTABLISHMENT OF ANY PALESTINIAN HOMELAND. IT SAID HE DESCRIBED AS EXTREMIST WHO ENGINEERED SEVERAL MASSACRES AGAINST PALESTINIANS, "THE MOST IMPORTANT OF WHICH WAS DEIR YASSIN."

5. COMMENT: SYRIAN EDITORIALS IN DAYS JUST PRIOR TO ELECTIONS HAD TAKEN THE LINE ABOUT ISRAELI DOMESTIC POLITICS THAT AMONG MAJOR PARTIES THERE WERE "ONLY HAWKS AND MORE HAWKS." REACTION TO LIKUD'S VICTORY FIRST PUBLIC INDICATION THAT UNCLASSIFIED

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SARG REGARDED ALIGNMENT AS PREFERABLE TO LIKUD.

6. WE NOTE RADIO ISRAEL COMMENTARY AT 1500 ASSERTED THAT IN ELECTION COMMENTARY "SYRIA SAYS MIDDLE EAST WILL DRIFT TOWARDS ANOTHER WAR." WE HAVE MONITORED NO SUCH COMMENT ON RADIO DAMASCUS NOR HAS SUCH COMMENT BEEN MADE IN TODAY'S PRESS.
MURPHY

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